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SPECIAL MEMO

June 16, 1958

To: My Colleagues in the Division of Higher Education

From:

Subject: Recent Trip to U.S.S.R., May 6 - June 10, 1958

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We left Washington on Tuesday, May 6, without visas for U.S.S.R. Took off from Idlewild at 3:30 p.m. on Scandinavian Airlines DC-7C and arrived in Copenhagen about 8:00 a.m., Wednesday morning, May 7, having flown right over Glasgow and Edinburgh in the early morning before crossing the North Sea. Could see all the early trains chuffing into town as we flew over Scotland; and the mountains and glens. We only had about three hours of darkness that night.

One day in Copenhagen, - a delightful city. Through the adroit maneuvering of the Counselor at the American Embassy, our visas for U.S.S.R. were secured.

Left Copenhagen, Thursday a.m., by SAS for direct flight to Moscow, - about four hours. All quite routine. Landed in the drizzle; were received by a delegation from the Ministry of Education; checked in at the Hotel Metropol; and got squared away with our interpreters, etc.

We spent one week in Moscow, visiting schools, institutes, teachers colleges, a youth nature study and touring center (like our Boy and Girl Scouts); went to a Bolshoi Opera Ballet; saw the Soviet version of Cinerama; saw most of the sights, - the Kremlin, the tomb of Lenin and Stalin (they still seem to be well preserved); and poked about a good deal in various stores. We had very productive conferences with officials in the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, and the Institute of Pedagogical Sciences.

Academy

Then we took off on our 16 day tour by chartered plane (like a Convair), accompanied by a camera crew of about ten people who made a one-hour long film of our trip. We spent about two days or slightly more in each of the following places (which are easily found on a map of U.S.S.R.), a swing of just about 6,500 miles. East of Moscow to Kazan. Then to Sverdlovsk, which is just over the Urals in Siberia. South-south-east to Alma-Ata in the foothills of the Himalayas and only a few hundred miles from China. Then west to Tashkent. An all-night hop from Tashkent to Sochi, the Black Sea resort

(stopped for gas at Ashkabad, practically on the border of Iran, and at Baku, just after we had crossed the Caspian Sea). We flew right up a beautiful valley between the Caspian and Black Seas, with the Caucasus Mountains rising on each side of us to as much as 17,000 feet. The sun rose with a bang out of the north-east over the snow-covered peaks of the Caucasus just as we passed over Tiflis, midway between the Caspian and Black Seas. From Sochi to Minsk. Minsk, a city of approximately 1 1/2 million, was beautiful and very inspiring since it had been completely destroyed by the Germans in W. W. II, less than twenty years ago. Then to Leningrad, the only European and most charming city that we saw in U.S.S.R. And so, back to Moscow for a final five days at the Hotel Ukraine which we spent checking up on previous information and having individual conferences with key officials. I had a particularly worthwhile conference one afternoon with an official of the Ministry of Higher Education.

At Kazan we were in the capital of the Autonomous Tatar Republic; at Alma-Ata (father of the apple) we were in the capital of Kazakhstan; at Tashkent, the capital city of Uzbekistan; Sochi is in the Georgian Republic; and Minsk is the capital of the Belorussian S.S.R.

We visited all types of educational institutions; and two collective farms, one near Alma-Ata and one near Tashkent. Sochi is the Atlantic City of the Soviet Union and has been taken over by palatial rest centers for workers from all over the Union; beautiful but no sand beach. I had my only swim in the Soviet Union there, but under difficulties. We secured interesting insights into the leisure life of the Soviet worker, - his tastes and compulsions.

Some general estimates or conclusions concerning the items which impressed me most:

1. This is the first culture I have experienced where there is absolute equality between men and women. (When I said this to a charming Parisienne, her reply was: "How awful !"). The relationship between boys and girls is something to see and to comprehend: great dignity and great respect for each other. At every desk in school, one girl, one boy. As a professor of psychology at the University of Leningrad said to me, (she had been a soldier in the defense of Leningrad in W. W. II): "With us, boys and girls, men and women, are partners. We are partners in education; partners in love; and partners in work." And they are. No evidence of, nor interest in, sex appeal. Considered, I believe, very bad form. When I asked a member of the U.S.S.R. Embassy in Washington why there seemed to be no evidence of sex appeal in entertainment in the Soviet Union similar to that in the U.S.A. or in France, his reply was simply: "With us, it is something sacred." PERIOD.

2. I would venture to say that whatever you hear about progress of education, technology, health, and general welfare in U.S.S.R., you can safely multiply by 2. It appears that people in the U.S.A. simply don't want to know what is going on in the Soviet Union. I would not wish to live in the Soviet Union and I don't know of many people who would, - the tensions are continuous and strenuous; but it is important for us to realize that practically all that they have accomplished has been done in the last forty-one years; and that for tens of millions of people, they've never had it so good.

3. The most dynamic element in the whole educational and technological situation is the institution called "The Academy of Science," and by science they mean all knowledge. This is subsidization by the State of the best brains. An academy of science is a regular part of the educational set-up in each republic, and the republic academies find their apex in the U.S.S.R. Academy of Science which is in Moscow. Talented individuals, who have proven their worth through productive research activity, are given an income for life and complete freedom to conduct their research when, as, and how they wish, - the subsidization by the State of Basic Research conducted by the top brains of the country. The individual member of the academy does not have to bother about pushing through his annual budget, - the only question is, how much does he need? It is my impression that the Soviet Union is setting the pace for the rest of the world in techniques for the development and mobilization of intelligence.

4. The genius behind the Russian revolution and the subsequent 41 years of progress was Lenin. It seems to me that we have heard too much about Marx and Engels and not enough about Lenin and his wife, Krupskaya. Between them, they planned and got under way the whole educational system, - from nurseries for children six months old, whose mothers are workers, right up through the academies of science, and including the Young Pioneers, the Young Communist League, and the Communist Party organization. Kalinin, who later became the first President of the Supreme Soviet, was an educational philosopher and planner. Lenin was the son of a superintendent of schools and a very highly educated mother. In school, he made straight A's. His genius was not only in theory and planning, but in action. Gorky was his great friend and co-planner of cultural development. Lenin's collected writings, speeches, etc. fill 30 volumes (in most good Party members' offices).

5. The university and college students were a wonderfully vital, enthusiastic, and friendly group of youngsters. Most of them come from parents who were illiterate before the revolution. They are very much concerned about world peace. They are worried about us. They were most anxious that we carry their friendly greetings to American students, and to assure American youth that Soviet students want peace.

6. I was unable to discern any evidence of a crack in the Kremlin wall; of any unrest; of any tendency to rise up and throw off the yoke. There definitely appeared to be no chance of success for anyone who might

want to try it. It was my impression that the people generally feel that conditions are improving gradually; they are looking ahead for five, ten, fifteen, or twenty years. They feel completely confident about achieving a quality of life and a standard of living as high as ours, but they accept the fact that it will take time, and perhaps some suffering, and that life is still pretty rigorous. It seemed like society in essentially a pioneer stage. Housing is still scarce but it is relatively cheap. Plenty of food. Apart from being reasonably neat, people seemed indifferent about dress.

7. I would personally recommend John Gunther's *INSIDE RUSSIA TODAY*. I took it with me. Have read a good deal of it. Several members of our party read it completely. There are a few inaccuracies, but in general, it seems to me to be a tremendous job, - reliable and enjoyable. As you may know, it is expected that we shall get out an official report of our trip during the next few months.

ADDENDUM

We left Moscow, Friday morning, June 6, in a TU-104, the super-jet commercial plane, and arrived in Brussels just three hours later, approximately 1,600 miles. A thrilling trip out over Riga, the Baltic, southern Sweden, then right smack over the center of Copenhagen (though 25,000 feet up), out across the lower North Sea, over Amsterdam, Antwerp, to Brussels.

I had a full afternoon and evening at the World's Fair. The U.S.S.R. exhibit was like a kick in the stomach, - I thought, superb for its purpose. The U.S.A. exhibit was, I thought, very bad. I am unable to appreciate how a tour-de-force in landscape architecture represents the spirit and power of the United States of America. My award to the U. S. exhibit would be the largest pansy I could find. After the shock of the American travesty, it was reassuring to go through the British Industrial exhibit. I had over half-an-hour with one of the engineers in charge of building the new atomic-powered electric power station at Bramwell, England. It would be my estimate that the British have what it takes to stand up to the Russians in world competition. The Vatican exhibit was tremendously interesting. The theme was the soul of man vs. the barbed wire of communist oppression. As you enter this exhibit, the central and only figure in the main foyer is Rodin's *THINKER*! In general, the Fair was much better than I had expected, being temperamentally anti-fairs. However a full afternoon and evening was plenty for me.

So, Saturday morning, after a visit with an old friend who has a major responsibility for the U.S. exhibit at the Fair, I took off for Paris, arriving there about 3:00 p.m. just after several light afternoon thunder-showers. My first visit to Paris.

Certainly, without any question, in early June, the most beautiful city in the world. All the time I was there, the weather was sunny and balmy; the sky was that particular light blue with puffy white clouds; the people seemed busy, reasonably gay, and not at all concerned about the state of the nation. A delightful cocktail party the evening I arrived, met a cross-section of professional people and some in public affairs.

Sunday morning, I was out early when there was practically no one on the streets; walked from La Grand Hotel (an old but very comfortable hotel on Place de l'Opera) down the Rue de la Paix, through the Place Vendome, through the Tuileries, the Place de la Concorde, across the Pont de la Concorde, and in a wide arc along the Boulevard Saint Germain, up around the University, Cafe aux Deux Maggots, and so back down to the River and Notre Dame. Stopped in at the Louvre. Give me the Winged Victory and you can have all the rest, including Venus de Milo and Mona Lisa. In all, a stroll of about eight miles.

Sunday afternoon, I was driven out toward Chantilly. Visited a Cultural Center in an old abbey, which is now a center for creative musicians, - much like the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire. Then attended the annual garden party given by La Duchesse de Noailles after the races at Chantilly, - much like the spring garden parties in Baltimore. Ali Khan, many other ambassadors, and practically everybody who was anybody in Paris were there. On the way back to town, stopped at Montmartre for a look around, and then supper at Le Tour d'Argent.

Monday morning, the delegation met at the U.S. Embassy, which is just off the Place de la Concorde. We had quite a staff meeting, and then took off for Unesco Headquarters, where we had a pleasant and profitable meeting with the top staff members. Managed to spend more than an hour at the Rodin Museum just before we went to the airport. Took off from Orly in a Boeing Stratocruiser, and had a very comfortable trip to New York. Arrived back in Washington at 10:45 a.m., Tuesday, June 10.

A tremendously interesting and most worthwhile five weeks in every respect. This should be the beginning of some very important contacts between educators in U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. We were cordially received everywhere. The educators of the Soviet Union set an extremely high standard of hospitality for us to reach in receiving the Soviet delegation here in October.

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